



COWLES LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

David L. Cowles, Jr., R.L.A. / 2285 Trescott Drive / Tallahassee, FL 32308 / (850) 545-7035 / www.cowlesLA.com

---

## ARBORIST FIELD REPORT

Capitol Grounds (House)  
Structure and Site Drainage Design and Repair  
Parking Garages #29, #30 and #31  
400 South Monroe Street / Tallahassee, FL 32399

July 3, 2019  
CLA Project No. 265.001 / 2019

### Introduction

During a site meeting on July 2, 2019 with the architect (+HoyStarkHagan), building contractor (Ajax), consulting arborist (CLA) and working arborist (AAA), additional information concerning tree #229 was discovered. This tree is a 33" DBH live oak as identified on the arborist report dated May 14, 2019.

### Assessment

Live oak trees are often multi-trunked or develop a branching structure that does not contain a central leader. This type of co-dominate branching can form included bark in between the two competing branches, which can be a weaker union – resulting in a higher risk of splitting / failure.

Although the tree is in good condition, it exhibits a co-dominate branching structure, and a cause for new safety concerns. The presence of the newly observed cracks associated with several main co-dominate branches suggests the tree is at a higher risk of failure than normal. The exact risk potential is unknown, but considering the targets would be heavy pedestrian use, immediate action is recommended for the health, safety and welfare of the public. See photos (attached).

### Mitigation

Solutions to minimize risk were discussed and listed below.

1. Crown pruning to thin the branching and reduce weight in the canopy would help to reduce risk, but will have to be perpetually managed.

2. The installation of cables and / or rods to hold the canopy together would be expensive.
3. Supporting post(s) would be functional but unattractive.
4. A combination of the above, but this tree (appearing to have no significant historical value) may not warrant the expense. There is the possibility that this tree may still fail regardless of these solutions.
5. Removal and replanting with a healthier specimen(s) would eliminate the current risk altogether, but is more of a long-term solution. The immediate loss of shade may be unpopular.

If needed, AAA can provide quotes for these solutions in order to make a cost comparison.

### Conclusion

For safety reasons, it is the preference of CLA and AAA to remove the tree and replant with a large specimen (or multiple smaller species) as directed by the project Landscape Architect (Patrick Hodges, R.L.A.)

If other solutions (to leave the tree in place) are pursued, then the previously proposed mitigation shall be performed, in conjunction with any risk abatement work in the canopy. The continual management and assessment will be essential if this tree is preserved.

### Professional Certification

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'D. Cowles, Jr.', with a stylized, cursive flourish at the end.

David L. Cowles, Jr., R.L.A.  
Florida Reg. No: LA6666917  
ISA Certified Arborist # FL-5314A

PHOTOS:



co-dominate branching in the upper trunk



recent crack along branch union